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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 001572

SIPDIS

STATE ALSO FOR EAP/BCLTV;
USPACOM FOR FPA

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#) [NLD](#)

SUBJECT: BURMA: REGIME RELEASES ADDITIONAL MAY 30 DETAINEES

REF: A. RANGOON 1518

[B](#). RANGOON 1444

[C](#). RANGOON 1431

Classified By: P/E Chief Murphy for Reasons 1.5 (B,D)

[1](#). (C) Summary: The SPDC acknowledged on December 5 that it had recently released up to 16 NLD party members who had been detained in connection with the May 30 Depeyin attack. By the regime's own admission, 14 individuals associated with the attack remain in detention. The regime's decision to release more detainees is not purely humanitarian, but rather may be the result of a quiet dialogue with ASSK and/or an effort to ensure a warm reception at several upcoming international forums. End Summary.

[2](#). (U) During a December 5 press conference to unexpectedly announce new money laundering regulations (septel), the SPDC verified international press reports that the regime had released as many as 16 NLD party members. The group of 16 activists, all members of the NLD youth division, had provided security for ASSK and her convoy during a swing through northern Burma and were detained following the May 30 Depeyin attack.

[3](#). (C) For the past six months, the 16 NLD members have been detained in Hkamti prison, a remote town in northern Sagaing Division, and were apparently released on December 2. According to NLD sources, however, the released party members are at the mercy of local government authorities for transportation out of their remote location and only a few have been able to contact their families. As of December 5, the NLD was able to verify the release of only eight party members, but found credible the government's claim that a total of 16 had been released.

[4](#). (SBU) During the recent visit of U.N. Special Rapporteur Pinheiro (ref C), the human rights envoy pressed the SPDC for the release of 35 specific political detainees, most of whom were NLD party members detained in connection with the May 30 convoy. The regime released eight of the detainees on November 9 (ref B), leaving 27 on the Pinheiro-NLD list. The SPDC now claims that with the latest release of 16 prisoners, only 14 individuals associated with the May 30 attack remain in detention. By NLD calculations, which correspond with the SPDC figures, 11 party members are still held in Sagaing jails, including NLD Vice Chairman U Tin Oo, and three NLD CEC members remain under house arrest in Rangoon (U Lwin, U Aung Shwe, and Aung San Suu Kyi).

[5](#). (U) According to NLD sources, the following party youth members were released o/a December 2:

--Myo Nyunt (Rangoon).

--Myo Thaw, aka Ko Pauk (Rangoon).

--Myint Kyaw (Rangoon).

--Thet Tun (Rangoon).

--Kwaw Zin Win (Irrawaddy).

--Toe Lwin (Irrawaddy; believed to have suffered serious head injuries on May 30).

--Min Lwin (Mandalay).

--Myint Wai (unknown hometown).

[6](#). (U) According to NLD sources, the following party youth members were held at Hkamti prison and were likely among those released o/a December 2:

--Tun Myint (Rangoon)

--Than Tun (Rangoon)

--Myo Zaw Aung (Mandalay)

--Aung Naing (Mandalay)

--Than Htay (Mandalay)

--Aung Kyaw Oo (Mandalay)

--Zaw Win Tun (Mandalay)

--Kyaw Soe Linn (Mandalay)

17. (S) Comment: The SPDC's motives for releasing NLD detainees (and issuing long-awaited money laundering regulations; septel) are clearly not humanitarian. First, there are credible reports that ASSK has continued to press her SPDC interlocutors for the release of her colleagues, the reopening of NLD offices, and a full investigation of the May 30 attack. The regime may be trying to meet her part of the way in order to continue a quiet dialogue and head off a renewed public standoff, in which ASSK could regain regional sympathies. Secondly, the regime is preparing to defend its road map for democracy at several upcoming forums, including the Japan-ASEAN summit in Tokyo December 11-12 and a Thai-sponsored Burma meeting on December 15. Releasing NLD party members, who were the victims of a brutal attack, increases the likelihood of a warm reception at those venues.
End Comment.

Martinez